



DOCTOR DISCUSSION GUIDE

Managing Kidney Cancer

If you've been diagnosed with kidney cancer, it's important to work closely with your doctor to plan the best treatment possible. Asking the right questions during your conversation will help you know what to expect and how to better navigate your condition. Familiarize yourself with these common terms before your appointment to help facilitate your discussion.

Vocabulary to Know

Your doctor might mention these common terms. Here's what they mean.

Renal	This refers to the kidneys and their surrounding structures. The kidney's artery and vein for example, are called the renal artery and the renal vein.
Urinalysis (U/A)	A urinalysis is a laboratory test that examines the chemical contents of urine, which is helpful in evaluating how well your kidneys are functioning. It can detect blood or cancer cells, although they are not always present with cancer of the kidney.
Biopsy	A sample of tissue that is examined under a microscope. It is usually helpful in the diagnosis of cancer. Sometimes, kidney cancer can be diagnosed without a biopsy because imaging tests can often identify it.
Staging	A type of cancer categorization based on the size of the tumor and how much it has spread. The cancer treatment plan depends on the staging.
Dialysis	When the kidneys are not functioning or are not present at all, dialysis can be used to filter the blood as a way to substitute for the job of the kidneys.
Nephrectomy	Removal of the kidney. A radical nephrectomy is removal of the kidney and surrounding structures, such as the blood vessels. A simple nephrectomy is removal of one kidney without removal of surrounding structures. A partial nephrectomy is removal of only the part of the kidney that has cancer.
Radiation Therapy	A type of treatment for cancer that relies on the energy emitted from X-rays to destroy cancer cells.
Chemotherapy	Powerful medication that destroys cancer cells, but can also cause side effects, such as nausea, hair loss, and lowered immune function.
Biological Therapy	A type of cancer treatment that uses substances that stimulate the immune cells to fight cancer. Biological therapy is a relatively new type of cancer treatment.
Targeted Therapy	Targeted cancer therapies are developed to inhibit cancer growth by targeting the specific ways that cancers grow. Sometimes, targeted therapies are used in treatment of kidney tumors.
Remission	When there are no longer signs of cancer, this is described as remission.

